

Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
OUTDOOR REPORT

Edited by Paul Holtan
Wisconsin DNR
PO Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921
(608) 267-7517
fax: (608) 264-6293
e-mail: holtap@dnr.state.wi.us
World Wide Web: <http://dnr.wi.gov>

Outdoor Report as of April 28, 2005

The unseasonably warm spring weather enjoyed earlier this month ended abruptly in the last week with conditions returning to more typical spring weather-- colder temperatures, gusty winds and even snow flurries in the north. Much of northern Wisconsin has received up to half an inch of precipitation in the last week, which is starting to green up forests and has reduced fire danger levels. As of Thursday, fire danger was rated as low throughout much of northern and central Wisconsin. Southern Wisconsin did not receive much rain, and fire danger levels were rated as very high throughout the lower Wisconsin River valley area.

On Lake Superior, Chequamegon Bay was churning most of the week with northwest winds and was chocolate colored from spring run off on the tributary streams and fishing has slowed down. Smelt fishing is done and success was again very low as the smelt population is down.

These changing conditions put a damper on much of the inland fish activity on northern lakes and chased many species back to deep water. Northern pike and walleye have completed their spring spawning and the musky spawning period has been put on hold with the colder weather. Water temperatures have dropped from the mid to upper 50s down to the upper 40s in the last week. Panfish activity slowed considerably with the drop in water temperatures.

Very strong winds kept many anglers away from Lake Michigan this past weekend. Boats were not able to get out on the lake very often, and even shore fishing pressure was very low. Despite the weather, fishing action remained fair out of Door and Kewaunee counties, where those anglers who did venture out continued to catch brown trout. A few steelhead continue to be taken on some Lake Michigan tributaries, but in general water levels have been low and fishing has been slow. The yellow perch season closes on Lake Michigan and its tributary rivers on Sunday, May 1.

(more)



The Wisconsin DNR Outdoor Report is issued each Thursday to media outlets, conservation and environmental organizations, and county, state and federal agencies. It is available to the general public by subscription to an e-mail distribution list and on the Wisconsin DNR World Wide Web site listed above. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. This document is available in alternative format upon request.

Some anglers continued to catch smallmouth and walleyes on the lower Wisconsin River. A few walleye have been caught on the Rock River and some white bass have also been biting throughout the Rock and Crawfish rivers. The Mississippi River stabilized early this week but then started to rise by the end of the week. Walleye and sauger action was pretty slow. Many walleye anglers were searching for post spawn fish up and down the river system. Panfish action had been good on Madison area lakes up to the arrival of cold weather.

Trout anglers are reminded that the early catch and release season closes Sunday, May 1. Trout fishing opens again Saturday, May 7, which is also the opening day of the general inland fishing season so now is the time to make sure that to have a current fishing license and boat registrations in order.

Second period turkey hunters had tough conditions to compete with the high winds and cool temperatures slowing the movement of turkeys somewhat. Despite less than ideal weather conditions many hunters still reported fair to good success.

Many species of ducks are being seen, including mergansers, scaup, ring-necked ducks, and bufflehead; with spring plumage on the males are very colorful this time of year. Smaller flocks of tundra swans and white pelicans have been seen. Ruffed and sharp-tailed grouse are at the peak of their breeding season. To attract females for breeding male ruffed grouse 'drum' on drumming logs. Sharp-tailed grouse can be seen congregating at their courtship sights called dancing grounds or leks.

With many spring wildflowers blooming, now is also a good time to give them a hand by getting out and pulling garlic mustard, an invasive, exotic plant that is taking over many woodlands and crowding out native flowers. See the DNR Web site for information on identifying and controlling garlic mustard.

#

**A three-minute audio version of this report can be heard by calling (608) 266-2277.
A new report is put on the line each week.**

DNR Northern Region

Superior DNR Service Center area

Brule River State Forest - Within a few days the weather has ranged from sunny and 82 degrees to cold and snow in the Wisconsin northland. It is enough to remind everyone not to put the long johns away just yet. The Bois Brule River is flowing at 204 cubic feet per second April 26. The 59-year average is 308 cfs. The dock is now set up at the St. Croix Landing....just in time for the fishing opener on May 7. The White River Creel Survey for the White River in Bayfield County will be starting again on the fishing opener and will continue through Sept. 30. Anglers cooperation with the creel clerk and the volunteer creel cards is very much appreciated. This survey is in conjunction with population estimates, temperature analysis, and water quality surveys in attempt to answer questions about the perceived decline of the brown trout fishery. Ruffed grouse are at the peak of their breeding season also. To attract females for breeding male ruffed grouse 'drum' on their drumming log. Preliminary survey results for males of both ruffed and sharptail species show lower populations this spring in this part of the state compared to last year. This is the peak time for sharptail grouse breeding activity. They can be seen congregating at their courtship sights called dancing grounds or leks. The male will do their courtship displays by "dancing" in a small circle and vibrating his tail feathers to make a rattling sound. Many birds have been observed migrating through the area recently. In Allouez Bay on the St. Louis River large numbers of water bird have been seen. This includes large groups of scaup, ring-necked ducks, and bufflehead; and several smaller flocks of tundra swans and white pelicans. Wood thrushes and broad-winged hawks have returned to the area. Marsh marigold, wood anemone, and blood root are just beginning to bloom. This year will be the 33rd year the Brule River Sportsmen's Club will sponsor a spring clean-up of the river corridor. Traditionally volunteers meet at the pavilion in Brule before 9 a.m. for coffee and donuts prior to being assigned an area to clean-up. An excellent lunch will be provided by the club at the Twin Gables around noontime. Boy Scout Troop 212 will be cleaning the river from Stones bridge to Hwy. 2 in canoes donated by Brian Carlson and the Brule River Canoe Rental. For all you steelhead anglers, you can easily fish a few runs in the morning, help with the clean-up, have a great lunch, and be back on the river by 1 p.m. This is a good opportunity to give something back to a river that gives you so much pleasure. As always we look forward to seeing new volunteers come and help put a fresh new face on the river corridor. Just like the habitat projects, more volunteers will speed up the work and lessen the burden on everyone.

Ashland DNR Service Center area

Chequamegon Bay was churning most of the week with northwest winds. The bay is chocolate colored from spring run off on the tributary streams and fishing has slowed down. Smelt fishing should be done and as stated in the past, success rate is down along with the smelt population. Local groups and fund raisers have their annual smelt fries this time of year so if smelters who missed out on catching any can still get a meal for a small price, that goes to some good cause and they don't have to do the dishes either. Tributary streams along Lake Superior continue to produce some nice rainbows. The peak fishing should be in the next week or two depending on the weather. Stream levels are low from lack of spring rains. There have been a few showers to keep the landscape damp but no heavy rains to help with water flow. Inland lakes are producing some panfish. Pressure is low. Lots of ducks, geese, song birds along the lakeshores and streams. A great time to be out and about to see spring unfolding. The woods are turning green and some leaf color (green variety) can be seen even along the South shore. A few warm days and some rain and everything with start to bloom in earnest. When fishing from a boat this time of year, remember to wear your life vests, let someone know where you will be fishing, and stick with your plan. Each spring there are people who drown due to cold water and not wearing a life vest. If a boat does swamp or have other problems stay with the boat, as trying to swim to shore may induce hypothermia. In Lake Superior that will surely happen if one is in the water for any length of time. Be safe out there while enjoying what spring time has to offer.

Spooner DNR Service Center area

I saw my first marsh marigold blooming this weekend. Geese are on eggs. Canid pups (wolves, coyotes, and fox) are just being born.

Park Falls DNR Service Center area

Unseasonably cold weather along with snow flurries has slowed the spring progression. More seasonable temperatures are forecast for later this week. Walleye spawning runs are done in most of the area streams. The good crappie action has slowed as the colder temperatures moved into the area though some fish were being caught on the warmer days as anglers are more active along with the fish. The cold spell set back the mosquito hatch and biting insects aren't a big problem for outdoor activities. Waterfowl numbers continue to increase in the area and are more visible on area waterways. The number and variety of birds visiting area bird feeders continues to increase as the migrants find their way back to their summer range.

(more)

With warmer weather and blooming flowers the hummingbirds will soon arrive. The risk of forest fires currently is low in the Park Falls area due to recent precipitation. Please be sure to check if burning permits are being issued in your area before considering burning brush piles. Tick season has arrived, so be sure to do a tick check after venturing into the woods or fields as wood and deer ticks have been reported on people and pets. Canoe and kayak enthusiasts are beginning to visit the Flambeau River and area waterways. Caution is advised when venturing out on the water in the spring when air temperatures are warm but the water is slowly warming and temperatures remain cold. Hypothermia can be a real danger if a person is exposed to the water without proper gear. Always wear a personal flotation device while enjoying paddle sports on the water and be sure to inform others of your trip plans and return time.

Upper Chippewa Basin fisheries report (Price, Rusk, Sawyer Taylor and inland Ashland and Iron counties)

- The unseasonably warm spring weather ended abruptly in the Northwoods last week and returned to more typical spring conditions -- colder temperatures, snow flurries and gusty winds. These changing conditions have put a damper on much of the fish activity and chased many species back to deep water. Northern pike and walleye have completed their spring reproductive rituals and the musky spawning period has been put on hold with the colder weather. Water temperatures have dropped from the mid to upper 50s down to the upper 40s in the last week. Look for the musky spawning season to pick up once again when water temperatures reach back into the mid 50-degree range. Panfish activity has also slowed up considerably with the drop in water temperatures and few fish have been observed in the shallows.

Woodruff DNR Service Center area

Although cool temperatures invaded the Northwoods recently, walleye-spawning activity is past peak and musky spawning has begun. This is leading up to a great potential for the general fishing season opener on May 7. Due to the wide range of lake ecosystems in this area a little scouting around should put a person into some active fish somewhere in the area. Opening day of fishing season is May 7 so make sure that to have a current fishing license and boat registrations in order. Anglers statewide will be able to catch trout, walleye, sauger and northern pike on inland waters. In this area, bass season also begins on May 7 and runs through June 17 but is catch-and-release only during this time period. Bass may be kept beginning on June 18, be sure to check the limit regulations on the body of water you intend to fish. Musky season does not begin until May 28 in the north. Remember to pick up the new fishing regulations, which are available at license outlets and area service centers. In areas that are impacted by tribal spear fishing activity, special bag limit inserts are also available. Spring rains raise water levels on many lakes, rivers, and streams so exercise caution around any of these types of bodies of water. Don't forget to wear your PFD when out on the water. For those people who continue to enjoy bird watching in the area, bluebirds are back. Trumpeter swans may also be returning to the area so be on the lookout as these swans are on the endangered species list. Anyone who spots a trumpeter swan, especially with a plastic neck collar, should call the local service center. For identification purposes, tundra swans have a 6-7 foot wing span and are about 3 feet in height. Trumpeter swans have a wingspan of about 7 feet and are about 4 feet in height. It is best to view these swans from a distance and to use binoculars. Did you know that the only hummingbird to breed east of the Mississippi River is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird? They should be returning to the area between May 1 to May 15. If you spot a yellow-bellied sapsucker, the ruby-throated hummingbird should not be too far behind as they follow the migration of these sapsuckers. The yellow-bellied sapsucker opens up sap wells that are an important food source for this particular hummingbird when floral nectar is not available. Although the area received rain, fire danger in the area is rated as very high. Burning permits are now required. Anyone conducting burning must pay special attention to control fires. Many Lake Property owners will probably notice strange, brightly lit and monstrous looking boats at nighttime at this time of year. Fisheries staff who have begun annual electrofishing operations on area lakes in order to survey fish populations operates these boats. Fyke netting is primarily conducted during the daylight hours. April and May are the busiest times of year in this regard and fisheries staff can be seen on the water on an almost daily basis until spawning season has ended. In addition, DNR Water Quality Biologists are collecting water samples to test for nutrient levels in approximately 50 area lakes. Many lakes exhibit increasing nutrient levels, sometimes as a result of increases in area development. The results will be used to monitor changes in lakes locally and statewide.

Northern Highland American Legion State Forest - Great blue herons have returned. Many mosses here are sporting mature sporophytes, the "fruiting" bodies that contain many tiny one-celled spores. The sporophytes release their spores only in dry weather, when the wind will carry the spores far and wide.

(more)

DNR Northeastern Region

Peshtigo DNR Service Center area

Marinette County - Cool temperatures along with mixed precipitation has enabled the lifting of burning bans. The cooler temps may slow the movement of turkeys somewhat. Fewer Toms have been observed displaying. Hens should be on the nests at this time. Woodcock and grouse are at their peak now for spring mating rites. Drumming counts and woodcock activity counts are in progress. Few frogs have been vocal at this time due to the cool weather. Wood ticks are becoming active in brushy areas. Aspen are budding out along with maples. This may be a slow year for maple syrup processors.

Suckers and walleye are active in the Menominee and Peshtigo Rivers.

Oconto County - Walleye and northern pike were being caught while trolling crank baits in 5-15 feet of water out from Oconto County Park II and the mouth of the Oconto River. A few white perch and northern pike are being caught off of the harbor breakwater pier on minnows. Some brown and rainbow trout are still being caught out in the Bay out from Oconto while trolling crank baits in 10-15 feet of water.

Shawano County - Most of the Canada geese have left for their breeding grounds in Canada. A new influx of shorebirds has arrived to Navarino Wildlife Area. Sandhill cranes are nesting now. The much needed rain has greened up the woods, so fire season is just about over. Prescribed burning on Navarino WA will be done in the next couple of weeks. Turtles and snakes are on the move and spring peepers are still calling. The cool weather has kept the mosquitoes and wood ticks at bay for awhile at least. No bear complaints yet, but removing bird feeders now will keep bears from damaging them. Turkey hunters are having good success, despite the weather. Earth Day will be celebrated on April 30 at Navarino Nature Center. The Shawano High School will host a Boating Safety Education Class beginning May 10 through May 24 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m. If you would like further information please contact the instructor at (715) 526-7921 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The Shawano Middle School is hosting an ATV Safety Class May 2 through May 16 on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. In order to register for the class please call (715) 758-8711.

Green Bay DNR Service Center area

Manitowoc County - On the Manitowoc River northern pike were being caught by anglers at Cato Falls. Steelhead fishing has been slow. Anglers on the Branch River were finding a few rainbows although fishing has been slow. Water levels are low on the East Twin River and anglers were having a tough time connecting with rainbows. A few fish were being caught on spawn and flies, but anglers were really having to work for the fish. Water levels are low on the West Twin River as well. Steelhead and suckers were being caught, but with less frequency than on the East Twin River. Poor weather kept most anglers from using the ramps, piers and harbors this past week in both Manitowoc and Two Rivers.

Sturgeon Bay DNR Service Center area

Door County - The beautiful warm spring-like weather took a spring break this week. The mild temperatures and sunny days, which were the rule for most of the past two weeks, were replaced by cold blustery and wet weather. Rain and even snow showers have put a damper on most outdoor activity in beautiful Door County. Despite the miserable weather the fishing action remained fair throughout the county. Brown trout continued to come out of Sturgeon Bay and Baileys Harbor, as well as Egg Harbor and Sister Bay. Anglers have been catching brown trout on stick baits and spoons throughout the county. Pre-spawn walleyes were beginning to be taken by anglers fishing at night with some nice catches of 8 –10 pound fish reported. Northern pike action remains slow but a few fish were being caught in Sturgeon Bay. A word of warning to boaters heading out to the big lake from Sturgeon Bay. The "Slow no Wake" zone has been extended to the Bay View Bridge. The City of Sturgeon Bay is in the process of putting up signs at the boat launches and on the bridge.

Peninsula State Park - As of April 26, all trails were open to hiking, Woodland leaves have yet to emerge. Bike trails are now open, though some sections of mountain bike trails remain wet or water covered. Sandhill cranes are back as are redwing blackbirds and bluebirds. A great (white) egret is spending time in the Weborg Marsh, and the osprey and eagle are back as well. Wood frogs and spring peepers are now "awake" in marshy areas. Bloodroot and Hepatica are blooming. Water facilities will be turned on May 1. Weborg Campground will open May 13. South Nicolet Bay will open May 20. North Nicolet Bay and Welckers will open May 26. Peninsula State Park golf course will open April 30. Visit the golf course web site at www.peninsulagolf.org. Eagle Bluff Lighthouse will be open for Lighthouse weekend May 21-22, weekends through June 5, and every day thereafter.

Kewaunee County - A week of cold temperatures and high winds kept many anglers off of Lake Michigan and its tributaries. Not much action has been reported, however, anglers were still catching a few Browns in 5-30 feet of water using Rapalas and spoons. Steelhead action has also been rather slow in Kewaunee County the past week. The majority of steelhead landed were caught on flies and a few on spawn sacs.

(more)

Oshkosh DNR Service Center area

DNR crews finished up tagging efforts on Lake Sturgeon late last week on the Wolf River. The cold weather has slowed fishing down on the Winnebago System, with some warm temperatures the white bass should begin, continue their annual spawning run. Walleye fishing near the Hwy. 41 bridge has been good. Largemouth bass fishing has been very good on Lake Puckaway even with the cooler weather. Second period turkey hunters had tough conditions to compete with the high winds last week. Despite less than ideal weather conditions during the first two spring turkey hunting periods, hunters still managed to harvest the same number of birds as last year in Winnebago and Fond du Lac counties. Turkey hunters should contact the DNR Oshkosh Service Center for information and location of new public hunting areas in Winnebago County. New properties have recently been purchased under the Glacial Habitat Restoration Area program and are now open to the public. Wildlife Management personnel have been actively conducting prescribed burns on state wildlife areas. Prescribed burns are conducted on fire depended habitat communities (e.g. grasslands, oak savannas, oak woodlands) to control brush invasion and stimulate native plant production. Birders are encouraged to walk the main dike on Eldorado Marsh Wildlife Area for easy viewing of greater yellowlegs, least sandpipers, and common terns. Landowners should be scouting their woods for the presence of garlic mustard. Consult the DNR Web site for information on control recommendations for this highly invasive non-native plant.

DNR Southeast Region

Very strong winds kept many anglers away from Lake Michigan this past weekend. Boats were not able to get out on the lake, and even shore fishing pressure was very low. Please keep in mind that yellow perch season closes on Lake Michigan and its tributary rivers on Sunday, May 1. The season will reopen on June 16.

Sheboygan County - In Sheboygan steelhead fishing on the Sheboygan River has been relatively slow, but anglers have been able to catch a few on stone fly patterns. When waves are not crashing over the Sheboygan piers, shore anglers have been able to catch a few brown trout on blue & white or blue & silver spoons.

Ozaukee County - In Port Washington the power plant area has produced occasional browns and rainbows on spawn.

Milwaukee County - In Milwaukee, water levels are low on the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers and on Oak Creek. Fishing in the rivers has been slow, but anglers fishing under the Hoan bridge have been catching brown trout on spawn sacs or minnows.

Milwaukee DNR Service Center

While cooler temperatures and northerly winds kept many hopeful gardeners paging through plant catalogs, those who ventured into the woods found the warming soil yielding new growth. The tree canopy may be bare, but the understory has plenty of spring wildflowers to feast the eyes on: Canada mayflower, rue anemone, early meadow rue, blue cohosh, spring beauty, white trout lily, bloodroot, marsh marigold, Dutchman's breeches, wild ginger, wild geranium and starry solomen's seal have all leafed out. And of course, the skunk cabbage has unfurled, beckoning to all unbelievers to roll some leaves between the palms to determine if the plant is properly named. Two great horned owl-ettes were seen flying from tree to tree in Mount Olivet Cemetery. While almost fully-feathered, they still had tufts of down on the sides of their heads, giving them a clown-like appearance. The large birds were very easy to spot in the bare maples, and the owls' curiosity of those traveling down below seemed just as intense as that of the graveyard strollers who stopped and peered up at them. In the downtown area, huge flocks of common herring gulls have begun forming their raucous colonies on top of the train station and other buildings. The flat, graveled roofs have become substitute sites for raising young, and many buildings already have dozens of nests with eggs. While living in the city has become acceptable to the gulls, the colonies have become quite a nuisance for building landlords, car owners and pedestrians alike. For those who use phenology rather than a calendar to measure the seasons, take heart for the eastern bluebirds have heralded that spring is officially here. Bluebirds were spotted two weeks ago in the counties to the west, but the cooler temperatures along the Lake Michigan shoreline can cause the migrations to lag behind a little bit. Swarms of lawn mowers came out of hibernation this past week, and buzzed fresh swatches on the newly greened grass. Yes, even the smell of Spring is in the air.

Racine County - On the Root River in Racine, the majority of steelhead caught have been taken on flies in Colonial Park. A few steelhead remain downstream of the weir in Lincoln Park, but they have been difficult to catch. The Root River Steelhead Facility was shut down on Thursday, April 21. Stop logs were removed from the weir to allow free passage of fish. The final number of fish passed upstream during the spring season were 819 steelhead, 6 brown trout, and 1 chinook. Approximately 344,000 Chambers Creek strain eggs and 430,000 Ganaraska strain eggs were taken as well.

Kenosha County - In Kenosha water levels on the Pike River are low, and fishing has been slow.

(more)

DNR South Central Region

Dodgeville DNR Service Center area

Iowa County - Some anglers are catching smallmouth and walleyes on the Wisconsin River downstream of the Hwy. 130 bridge on artificial lures and night crawlers. Turkey hunters in Iowa County are reporting that the weather is too cool and windy with birds being most active late in the day. A few morels have been found but should pop up good once the warm weather returns.

Fitchburg DNR Service Center area

Dane County - The first few periods of the turkey season have been successful for hunters with the nice weather playing a big part. Panfish action on the area lakes has been good up to the cold weather this past weekend. Best action has been around Mendota at the various creeks and streams around the lake. The Tenney Park break wall is starting to pick up. Reminder there is no fishing in the Yahara River from the Tenney Park locks to the Johnson Street bridge until opening day. Most of the local fish runs are over with a few muskies still hanging out by the Wingra spillway, which is also a fish refuge until May 15. A reminder game fish season is closed until May 7 and you can not fish for fish during the closed season including catch and release.

Jefferson County - Fishing success for legal size walleye on the Rock and Crawfish rivers has been slow lately. A few 16 to 18 inch walleye have been caught off the wall in Fort Atkinson and below the dam in Jefferson mostly on a jig and minnow. The walleye are moving back downstream on the rivers now that the spawn is over. Some white bass have also been biting on twistertails throughout the Rock and Crawfish rivers. Most are in the 10-12 inch range. On the marsh on Rock Lake, anglers were catching some 9-10 inch bluegill out of the boats. The fish were biting on spikes and small flies. A few crappie have also been biting on the marsh. On Red Cedar Lake anglers have also been catching some bluegill and crappie. Some of the fish are 9-10 inches in size. Turkey hunters had less success during the second time period compared to the first. Cooler weather, wind and some rain kept the birds quieter and less willing to respond to calls.

Rock County - The fishing activity had been fairly slow due to the cold weather. Walleye and Northerns have been caught and released at Monterey Dam. Turkey hunters are having great success during the first and second seasons, there have been turkeys spotted all over Rock County this year. Morel mushrooms are not yet out yet, but within weeks should be arriving. Many different species of drake ducks have been hanging out on the Rock River near Newville. The spring plumage on the males are very colorful this time of year.

DNR West Central Region

Baldwin DNR Service Center area

St. Croix County

Willow River State Park - Rainfall this week has been generally light and should have minimal effect on the Willow River. Trout anglers are reminded that the early catch and release season closes Sunday, May 1. Trout fishing opens again Saturday, May 7. Cold weather has shut down the frog calling. Flush toilets and showers will be open for the weekend in the campground. Reservable dates begin April 29. If the office is closed, please self-register for vehicle admission and camping if needed. Self-registration is limited to two nights of camping. Complete instructions are posted outside the office.

La Crosse DNR Service Center area

Cool and windy conditions made the waters of Lake Onalaska rough and inhospitable over the weekend. Water levels appeared to have risen again and the upper stretch of the Black River was accessible from Lake Onalaska. Fishing action was generally poor on Lake Onalaska with a few fishers having success on perch and largemouth bass. Some fishers contacted on the Black River reported having action on channel catfish earlier in the week, but otherwise no panfish action. Waterfowl such as blue wing teal, mallards, widgeon, scaup and Canada geese were active on Lake Onalaska. Bald eagles, northern harriers, cooper's hawks, and kingfishers were also observed active on Lake Onalaska and the Black River. Several people reported having found small patches of morels in the La Crosse Area during the previous week. Bloodroot, skunk cabbage, and violets were in bloom in the river bottoms and many tree species were beginning to foliate. Toads and gray tree frogs are calling. House wrens, upland sandpipers, and rose-breasted grosbeaks are some of the recent songbird arrivals. Hummingbirds, orioles, bobolinks, and many warblers will be arriving soon. Speaking of hummingbirds, now is the time to put out hummingbird feeders so they are in place when the birds arrive. Fill hummingbird feeders with a nectar mixture of four parts water to one part cane sugar, which is boiled and left to cool. Turkey hunters are reporting average success.

(more)

Crawford County - The Mississippi River stabilized early this week but then started to rise by the end of the week. The Mississippi River stage jumped up to over 14 feet a couple weeks ago but dropped to around 11 feet. Presently the river is rising again and is now at 11.8. The Wisconsin and Kickapoo rivers' water levels are about average for this time of year. Barge traffic has started back up after the high water on the Mississippi so boaters should use caution. Walleye and sauger action at the Lynxville dam was pretty slow this week. All the gates at Lock and Dam #9 are still open causing a lot of water to come through. Most of the boat landings in the area are accessible. Some anglers were catching fish on blue/white, chartreuse, purple jigs tipped with similar color plastics. Some anglers were using minnows and some have started using night crawlers. Some walleye anglers were casting crank baits along rocky shorelines or wind dams in an attempt to locate post spawn walleyes. Some were vertical jigging while drifting while others were long lining and trolling. There hasn't been much walleye or sauger action out in front of Lawler Park in Prairie du Chien on the East Channel. Many walleye anglers are now searching for post spawn fish up and down the river system. The second turkey season (Period B) opened on Wed., April 20. Most hunters reported very good action. Gobbling and strutting activity has been reported throughout the county. Hunters were met with some very cold mornings and windy days especially during the weekend, which made hunting difficult. There have been some very nice toms killed this season. The spring turkey hunting season consists of 6 5-day hunting periods (Wednesday through Sunday). Hunting ends at 5 p.m. each day. Bald eagles have spread out somewhat but can still be seen up and down the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers. Bald eagles are pretty much finished building their nests. Many Canada geese are sitting on eggs. Numerous duck species can be seen on the Mississippi Pools and backwaters. Many song birds are starting to sit on eggs also. Tom turkeys are actively gobbling, ruffed grouse are drumming and rooster pheasants have been cackling most mornings. Many gobblers have been seen displaying with hens. Baby squirrel are being born so take care when cutting down trees. Many of the back waters are full of a variety of frogs. A chorus can be heard in the early morning and late afternoon. Numerous turkey vultures have been seen in the area soaring on the thermals. Most tree species are starting to leaf out. Dandelions and other wild flowers are blooming and some landowners have even moved their grass. Outdoor users should be aware that ticks are out in force and mosquitoes are even starting to show up.

Elroy-Sparta State Trail - The three tunnels on this trail are open. Staff are grading and packing the trail this week. Both the Elroy and Sparta walk-in campgrounds will reopen May 1. All sites are available on a first-come-first serve basis. Please self register before setting up. Spring ephemerals such as marsh marigold, bloodroot and spring beauty are in bloom. The Kendall Depot Trail Headquarters will be open May 1.

400 State Trail - Staff are grading and packing the trail this week. A separate 7-mile long horseback riding trail runs parallel to the main trail between Wonewoc and La Valle. Horses must stay on the grassy portion and are not allowed on the limestone surfaced trail. Dutchman's breeches, marsh marigolds and spring beauties are beginning to bloom. A resident pair of bald eagles is back on their nest again this year.

La Crosse River State - The trail has been graded and packed. It is in fine condition for biking, running, hiking and bird watching. "Always on a Sunday" Prairie Hikes with Bob Lee begin Sunday, May 1.

Black River Falls DNR Service Center area

Jackson County and Black River State Forest ATV trails are expected to open on May 14.

Eau Claire DNR Service Center area

Eau Claire County ATV trails will open May 1. Now is a great time to take a weekend drive through West Central Region counties. Oaks are leafing out and the hillsides are gently colorful. Deer and turkeys can often be seen along with an abundance of roadside birds. Look for Red Wing Blackbirds in marshy areas and in some Dunn and Eau Claire County spots yellow-headed blackbirds can sometimes be seen.

Wisconsin Rapids DNR Service Center area

Buckhorn State Park - Fishing activity around the Buckhorn bridge with a lot of walleyes being caught, most being undersized. Spring flowers and wildlife are great for taking photos for the annual photo contest. Sandhill cranes and frogs are being heard in the park. The lake is open and boarding piers are in. Canoes are available to rent. Campsites 8-12, 16, 20-29 and the group camp (A1-A8, B1-B3) are now open. All other sites are closed. There are still openings for the accessible cabin for May and October. 2005 Youth Deer hunt applications are now available. Call (608) 565-2789 for more information.

Mill Bluff State Park - Snow and ice cover is gone. Trails are firming up. Spring rains keep portions soft. Camping opens Memorial Day Weekend on Friday, May 27. Turkeys are gobbling in the morning, turkey vultures are soaring, bluebirds are nesting. Spring flowers are beginning to bloom.

Roche-A-Cri State Park - The park trails are in very good condition, the recent rains have the prairies beginning to show some green, and the song birds, turkey vultures, and sandhill cranes are returning to the park. Campsites 1 through 25 are now open. The office will be open part time during the early season, please use the self-registration stations located in the office parking lot and the south parking area.

#

UPCOMING EVENTS AT STATE PARKS, FORESTS, AND TRAILS WATCHABLE WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Check with the park or forest of your choice for additional activities and special events not listed. Most events are free of charge; park admission sticker required unless otherwise noted. **Events and times subject to change.**

Saturday, April 30, 2005

Aztalan State Park, Lake Mills, (920) 648-8774 - Tour of Ancient Aztalan. Experience the history and mystery of one of Wisconsin's premiere archaeological sites. Transportation is available for up to two people who cannot walk the site. Lower parking lot. 1-2 p.m.

Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area, Horicon, (920) 3877-7877 - Marsh Melodies: Native American History. Exhibits, activities and tours focusing on the area's Native American Indian history. Experts will provide presentations, stories and insights into the local cultural history, along with museum quality display of local artifact collections. Children's programs, an authentic buck skinners camp, various activities and tours of the prehistoric effigy mounds in the area. .9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday.

Richard Bong State Recreation Area, Kansasville, (262) 878-5600 - Nature Journaling. Make your own beautiful nature journal. Learn tips on what to put in your journal. We will even go out and practice, so dress for the weather. Recommended for ages 10 and up. Please call to preregister and prepay the \$5 fee. Meet at the Visitor Center. 10 a.m. - noon.

Sunday, May 1, 2005

La Crosse River State Trail, Ontario, (608) 337-4775 - Always on a Sunday. Guided hike on the Rockland Prairie lead by local naturalist/columnist Bob Lee. Wear comfortable walking shoes and dress for the weather. A hat to block the sun is recommended. Meet at the junction of the La Crosse River State Trail and Commercial Street in Rockland. 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 3, 2005

Whitefish Dunes State Park, Sturgeon Bay, (920) 823-2400 - Spring in the Wetland. Have you seen the wetland in spring? Come discover the animals and plants that call the wetland home. Dip your net into a magical world. Dress for the weather and for getting damp during this longer program. 10 a.m.

Friday-Monday, May 6-9, 2005

Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area, Horicon, (920) 3877-7877 - Marsh Melodies: Horicon Marsh Bird Festival. With more than 275 species of birds having been sighted at Horicon Marsh over the years, the Bird Festival offers numerous opportunities to see the abundant wildlife of the area. This event will offer walking and bus tours of the marsh with experts, demonstrations of bird banding, live presentations with hawks and owls, children's programs and many other opportunities to experience the bird life of this "Globally Important Bird Area." . 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. Friday, 12:01 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Saturday, 6 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Sunday and Monday.

Saturday, May 7, 2005

Havenwoods State Forest, Milwaukee, (414) 527-0232 - Family Program: Wildflower Walk. The woodland wildflowers are just starting to pop up from the ground. We'll go in search of some spring flowers and learn about how they grow. We'll plant some new seeds to help keep our woods growing with wonderful wildflowers. This program is for children ages 4-12 and their parents, grandparents, or adult friends; it is not intended for groups or organizations. 10:30 a.m. - noon.

Kettle Moraine State Forest--Northern Unit, Campbellsport, (920) 533-8322 - Family Nature Program: Attacking Forest Invaders. Garlic mustard, buckthorn, and honeysuckle are few of the non-native plants invading the Kettle Moraine. Learn why these plants are unwelcome and how to control them. We will remove some honeysuckle by playing tug-of-war with them. Bring your work gloves. If you would like to make a garlic mustard tie-dye bandanna, please bring 50 cents. To register, call the Ice Age Visitor Center at (920) 533-8322 by May 5. This program is best suited for families with children ages 5 to 12 years and older. Ice Age Visitor Center. 9:30-11 a.m.

Sunday, May 8, 2005

Richard Bong State Recreation Area, Kansasville, (262) 878-5600 - Mother's Day Wildflower Hike. Show Mom (or anyone special) a bouquet she'll always remember. Bring your camera to take the memories, not the flowers, home. Trail is rough and wet, dress for hiking. Meet at the Visitor Center but be prepared to drive. 2-4 p.m.

#



Department of Natural Resources – CE/6
PO Box 7921 Madison WI 53707-7921

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Report is a compilation of outdoor recreation information from DNR offices around the state. A variety of DNR staff, including conservation wardens, fish and wildlife biologists, naturalists, educators and customer service representatives, contribute information to the Outdoor Report. The Outdoor Report is issued each Thursday with information gathered in the previous week. People traveling to or within Wisconsin should call ahead to where they will be traveling for the most current conditions. Additional recreation information can be found on the Department of Tourism Web site at <http://www.travelwisconsin.com>.

